

Over the last 4 years, the United States and Russia have taken important steps to build a safer, more peaceful world. We look forward to continuing the close work between our two countries as we lay the foundation for a bright, new century.

Remarks at a Victory Celebration in Little Rock, Arkansas

November 5, 1996

My fellow Americans, thank you for being here. Just 4 years from now we will enter a new century of great challenge and unlimited possibility. Now, we've got a bridge to build, and I'm ready if you are.

Today the American people have spoken. They have affirmed our course. They have told us to go forward. America has told every one of us, Democrats, Republicans, and independents, loud and clear, it is time to put politics aside, join together, and get the job done for America's future. In the last 4 years we've made remarkable progress, but in our schools, our families, our workplaces, and our communities, our journey is not done. My fellow Americans, we have work to do, and that's what this election was all about.

I want to say to all of you here and to all of the American people, no words can convey the gratitude I feel tonight for the honor that has been given to me. It is an honor that belongs to many: first to my family, to my wonderful wife of 21 years, who from the day I first met her began teaching me that it does take a village to raise our children and build our future; to our daughter, Chelsea, for understanding the work we have done together, the burdens it has imposed. Today I went down to the train station to vote in the last election in which I will appear on the ballot. And as I have done in every year since she was born, I took Chelsea to the ballot with me. And as we looked at the ballot together and discussed the issues there, I thanked God that I was born an American.

I thank the members of my wonderful family who are here, my stepfather Dick Kelley, my wonderful mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham, and all the others. And I thank

my beloved mother who is smiling up there and said, "I never had a doubt, I always knew it would be this way."

I thank the friends of my lifetime. There are people who have stood with me through thick and thin, who started with me in grade school, in junior and senior high school, in college, and all across the years since, friends who knew me and knew my dreams and stood as a powerful force against those who sought to stop America's progress with the politics of personal destruction. Thank you, my friends. Thank you for what you did for America.

I thank the people of my beloved native State. I would not be anywhere else in the world tonight. In front of this wonderful old capitol that has seen so much of my own life and our State's history, I thank you for staying with me so long, for never giving up, for always knowing that we could do better.

I thank the finest Vice President this country has ever seen. Because of Al Gore, we have a stronger and more secure relationship with a democratic Russia; we are exploring the wonders of new technologies for the benefit of America; we are protecting our environment; and we have reinvented America's Government so that it does more with less, thanks to his leadership. It is a legacy unique in the history of this Republic.

I thank Tipper for her friendship, for her crusades on behalf of our children and the mental health of the American people, and for always standing with us, along with her children and her family.

I thank the members of our administration, the Cabinet members, the members of the White House staff. I thank all those who are part of the permanent service to the President at the White House, the medical staff. I thank especially my Secret Service detail that has been so challenged by a President determined not to be isolated from the American people.

I thank the members of our campaign staff, all those who have served in this election and the work you have done. I thank the leaders of our party in the Congress, in the statehouses. I thank all those who stood for what we believe in in these elections today, those who won and those who did not. You did a service to America by raising the

things in which we believe. And I thank you all and wish you Godspeed.

I want to thank the employees of the Nation's Government. They have had to do a remarkable job. We have reduced the size of our Government to its smallest point since President Kennedy served, and yet they have continued to serve the people better year-in and year-out. They had to do it in the face of enormous challenges and outright hatred for momentary periods. They have had to live with the horror of Oklahoma City and the difficulties that came along the way. But the people who served us deserve our thanks, and I thank them.

I thank those who served this administration and our cause who are no longer here tonight. And one especially I must thank, my friend and brother, Ron Brown. You're looking down on us, and I know you're smiling, too.

On a purely personal note, I must thank my pastor, Rex Horne, who prayed with me before I came out here tonight, and all the ministers and people of God who prayed for me and with me over these last 4 years. There were a few especially, and they know who they are, who came to the White House time after time, in good times and bad. When the times were bad they reminded me that God gave St. Paul a thorn in his flesh so he would not become exalted in his own eyes and that certainly was not a problem for me in the bad times. [*Laughter*] When the times were good, they reminded me that humility is always in order in the Presidency, for in this life we see through a glass darkly, and we cannot know the whole truth of our circumstances or the motives of those who oppose us. I thank them all for bringing me closer to God and to the eternal wisdom without which a President cannot serve.

I would like to say a special word of thanks to Senator Dole. And I ask you to join me in applause for his lifetime of service to the United States. [*Applause*]

And I thank Jack Kemp for his service to America and his devotion to the proposition that this is a country in which everyone should have a chance to live free and equal and to have a chance at success.

Let me say, I had a good visit with Senator Dole not too long before he went out to

speak. I thanked him for his love of our country, for his years of service. I applauded the campaign that he fought so bravely to the very last minute. I thanked him for the work we did together to advance the common cause of America. And on behalf of all Americans, I wish him well and Godspeed.

Four years ago, on these very steps, we set forth on a journey to change the course of America for the better, to keep the American dream alive for everyone willing to work for it, to keep America the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity, to come together as one American community. The time was one of widespread frustration and doubt about our economic and social problems, about our ability to deal with the vast sweep of change that was all around us. The scope and pace of those changes were threatening to many, and our values seemed to be under attack on all sides. But together, you and I vowed to turn our country around, with a strategy to meet our challenges and protect our values: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, an American community of all Americans.

We have worked hard to end the politics of who's to blame and instead to ask, what are we going to do to make America better? Tonight we proclaim that the vital American center is alive and well. It is the common ground on which we have made our progress. Today our economy is stronger, our streets are safer, our environment is cleaner, the world is more secure, and thank God, our Nation is more united.

To all the men and women across this country who have created our jobs, taught our children, patrolled our streets, and kept America safe throughout our world, I say America's success is your success; this victory is your victory. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now, my fellow Americans, a vast new century lies before us. It will be a time more full of opportunity for people to live out their dreams than any in human history. We have committed this night to continuing our journey, to doing the hard work that will build our bridge to the 21st century, to give the young people here and those all across America the America they deserve and their children and their children's children.

But we have work to do. We have work to do to keep our economy growing steady and strong, by balancing the budget while we honor our duties to our families, our parents, and our children, and our duty to pass on to our children the Earth God gave us. We have work to do to give all of our children the gift of an education, to make sure every 8-year-old can read; every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet; and yes, every single 18-year-old in this country willing to work for it can have a college education.

We have work to do to make the permanent under class in this country a thing of the past, to lift our fellow citizens who are poor from the degradation of welfare dependency to the pride and dignity of work. We have work to do to strengthen our families; to help our parents succeed at home and at work; to keep our children safe from harm in their schools, their streets, their homes, and their communities; to clean up our environment so that our children can grow up next to parks, not poison; to tell them that drugs are wrong and illegal and they can kill them; to teach them right from wrong.

My fellow Americans, I will do all I can to advance these causes. But all our citizens must do their part to continue the upsurge of personal responsibility that in the last 4 years has brought crime to a 10-year low, child support collections to an all-time high, and reduced the welfare reform. Will you help me do that? *[Applause]* We must do it together.

We must make our democracy stronger by enacting real, bipartisan campaign finance reform. Talk is no longer enough; we must act and act now. And the American people will be watching the leaders of both parties to see who is willing not just to talk but to act. I am willing to act, and I ask others to join me.

And we must keep America the world's indispensable nation, finishing the unfinished business of the cold war, meeting the new threats to our security through terrorism and the proliferation of dangerous weapons and seizing these extraordinary opportunities to extend our values of peace and democracy and prosperity.

Every American here tonight and every American within the sound of my voice can

take pride in the fact that in these last few years, for the first time in all of human history, a majority of the human beings living on this globe live under democracies where the people rule.

The challenges we face, they're not Democratic or Republican challenges, they're American challenges. What we know from the budget battles of the last 2 years and from the remarkable success of the last few weeks of this Congress is the lesson we have learned for the last 220 years: what we have achieved as Americans of lasting good, we have achieved by working together.

So let me say to the leaders of my Democratic Party and the leaders of the Republican Party, it is time to put country ahead of party. We do not know the final outcome of the congressional elections, but we know this: the races are close; the American people have been closely divided; the Congress, whatever happens, will be closely divided. They are sending us a message: work together, meet our challenges, put aside the politics of division, and build America's community together.

On this beautiful night, when we have shared so much joy and so much music and so much laughter and so much pride, it is hard for me to believe that it was 23 years ago when I first began to go to the people of Arkansas to ask for their support. The most lasting and important thing that I have learned in all those 23 fleeting years is this: When we are divided we defeat ourselves, but when we join our hands and build our families and our communities and our country, America always wins. What we need to do is to do the work of America the way we seek to do the work of raising our children and doing our work and supporting our religious institutions and our community institutions. If we would simply be Americans, the way we seek to live in all of our other roles, there is no stopping America. Our best days are still ahead.

And so I say, when we look into our hearts and simply ask what is right for the American people and the future of our children, when we set aside our differences and build on our shared values of faith and family and work, when we roll up our sleeves and work together, America always wins. And my fellow

Americans, America is going to keep winning these next 4 years.

Let me say that, as all of you here from my native State know, I believe this and I have tried to live by it because there is no person in America who has been given more gifts than I have; there is no person in America tonight who feels more humble in the face of this victory than I do. Fifty years ago, when I was born in a summer storm to a widowed mother in a small town in the southwest part of our State, it was unimaginable that someone like me could have ever become President of the greatest country in human history. It has been, for me, a remarkable journey, not free of failure but full of adventure and wonder and grace. I have worked hard to serve, but I did not get here on my own.

Every step along the way, for these last 23 years and long before, there was a teacher, a doctor, a neighbor, a parent, a friend, a wife, a daughter who always had time to care, who always tried to give me instruction and encouragement, and who never gave up. I got here tonight, my fellow Americans, because America gave me a chance.

That is what all the children of America deserve. Our people have to give them the tools to give them not a guarantee, but that real chance to live up to their God-given potential. And I ask you to join me in that commitment. Every child deserves the main chance that I was given.

And so I say, again, let us resolve to run our country the way we try to run our lives. Whether you are the party of Thomas Jefferson or the party of Abraham Lincoln, whether you're an independent or unaffiliated, remember that we all belong to the greatest Nation in history. To us much has been given and much is still expected. We must rise to the challenge of building that bridge to the 21st century.

Tonight is a night for joy not just for us here but for all Americans. For the 53d time in our history our people have made their quiet and deliberate decision. They have come together with their powerful voice and expressed their will. Tonight we celebrate the miracle of America. Tomorrow we greet the dawn and begin our work anew.

I am more grateful than I can say. You have given me an opportunity and a responsibility that comes to few people. I will do my best. And together, we will—we will—build that bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you. Good night, and God bless America. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 p.m. on the steps of the Old State House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Prevention of Importation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

November 4, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am writing pursuant to section 229 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997, to inform the Congress that the United States has the capability to prevent the illegal importation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons into the United States and its possessions.

The United States Government has developed and maintains myriad international and domestic programs to prevent the illegal importation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) into the United States. The scope and nature of our approach is essential because at least 20 countries have or may be developing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. Moreover, terrorist groups have become increasingly capable, often employing lethal, wide-ranging and sophisticated operating methods and technical expertise. This trend is exacerbated by the spread of dual-use technologies, many of which have legitimate civilian or military applications.

Our response to this multi-dimensional threat begins far from our borders. The Departments of Defense and Energy, for example, have developed programs that have succeeded in eliminating or more fully safeguarding tons of fissile materials in the former Soviet Union. These materials—essential to nuclear weapons production—could be targeted for acquisition by terrorist groups or pariah nations and used against the United States. We also are assisting Russia in the elimination of the chemical weapons